

#### **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:**

Claim 15 is canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 17-18 are added. Claims 1 and 14 are amended. The following is the status of the claims of the above-captioned application, as amended.

Claim 1 (Currently amended) A method for producing a food product comprising:

- a) contacting meat with lactobionic acid; and
- b) producing a food product from the meat contacted with lactobionic acid, wherein the food product comprises between 0.1 and 20 % (weight/weight) lactobionic acid.

Claim 2 (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising mixing minced meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 3 (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising treating pieces of meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 4 (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising tumbling meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 5 (Original) The method of claim 1 comprising marinating meat with lactobionic acid.

Claim 6 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 comprising freezing the food product.

Claim 7 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 comprising heating the food product.

Claim 8 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the meat is fish meat.

Claim 9 (Original) The method of claim 8 wherein the food product is surimi.

Claim 10 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the food product is an emulsified meat product.

Claim 11 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the meat is from beef, pork, chicken, and/or turkey.

Claim 12 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the lactobionic acid is in the form

of sodium, potassium, magnesium, or calcium lactobionate.

Claim 13 (Previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the lactobionic acid is produced by enzymatic oxidation of lactose.

Claim 14 (Currently amended) A meat based food product comprising between 0.1 and 20 % (weight/weight) lactobionic acid.

Claims 15-16 (Canceled)

Claim 17 (New)        The meat based food product of claim 14, comprising between 0.2 and 10 % (weight/weight) lactobionic acid.

Claim 18 (New)        The meat based food product of claim 14, comprising between 0.5 and 5 % (weight/weight) lactobionic acid.